

CICC Group Training Course : October 1991- March 1992, Tokyo, Japan

Andrew Lee*

Abstrak: *The Center of the International Cooperation for Computerization Japan (Yayasan CICC) menawarkan pelbagai program latihan dalam bidang komputer dan teknologi maklumat. Satu daripada programnya ialah latihan teknologi berkomputer selama 6 bulan yang dijalankan di negeri Japan. Pelatih-pelatih datang daripada negara-negara sedang membangun dan mereka mengikuti kursus seperti program suaikenal mengenai masyarakat dan kehidupan di Jepun, lawatan sambil belajar serta menjalankan kursus latihan berkomputer. Latihan berkomputer memberi peluang secara langsung kepada pembangunan teknologi komputer di Jepun.*

Abstract: *The Center of the International Cooperation for Computerization Japan (CICC Foundation) offers various training programmes in computer and information technology. One such training programme is the 6-months practical training course in computer technology held in Japan. Participants from developing countries took part in an orientation programme on Japanese society and living in Japan, study tours and computer training. The training offers participants the opportunity to witness and experience at first-hand Japanese developments and progress in computer and information technology.*

The Center of the International Cooperation for Computerization Japan (CICC Foundation) was formed on June 1, 1983 under the cooperation of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), Japan and major Japanese companies and other organizations related to computerization and information technology. Among the members of CICC are Fujitsu Ltd. Toshiba Corp., Mitsushita, Mitsubishi Corp., NEC Corp., Sharp Corp., Omron Corp., Hitachi Ltd., Japan Electronic Industry Development Association, Canon Inc. and Oki Electric.

The purpose of the CICC Foundation is to promote computerization in the developing countries through various cooperative programmes and activities held either in Japan or in the developing countries. One of its activities is the biannual (April-Sept. and Oct.-March) education and training programme for developing countries. Successful candidates are invited to undergo the six months hands-on training in CICC headquarters in Tamachi, Tokyo.

The training programme is fully sponsored by the Association for Overseas Technical Scholarship (AOTS), a non-profit organization supported and

subsidised by MITI and other Japanese organizations which oversees the training and welfare needs of trainees from developing countries. The trainees were housed in an ultra modern training hostel, the Yokohama Kenshu Center (YKC) about 11/4 hour train journey to CICC. YKC has facilities for various indoor and outdoor recreational games, television lounges, computer-aided learning rooms, lecture rooms, and a library with an adequate collection of international and regional periodicals. Many of AOTS and YKC staff are able to converse in English and were available at all times to provide assistance to the hostelites. YKC had a cosmopolitan population of trainees from developing countries undergoing various training and/or orientation programmes.

A total of 31 trainees from 16 countries were invited to the second training session. The trainees comprised of a group of expertise from the banking sector, institutes of higher education, research and development institutions, education ministries, and software houses. The common factor of the group was their involvement in computers in their respective professions.

* Librarian, Engineering Library, University of Malaya.

TRAINING PROGRAMME

The training programme could be divided into 3 parts:

- 1) An AOTS 3-weeks orientation programme on Japanese life and culture, its commerce and industrial system particularly its management system.
- 2) CICC training programme, including theoretical and practical training of various aspects of computer technology both hardware and software applications.
- 3) Study tours and visits to Japanese industries, and visits to exhibitions related to the training programme.

Orientation Programme

The 3 weeks orientation programme gave a panoramic view of the Japanese people, their work ethics, customs and lifestyle. It was given in the form of lectures, study tours to places such as Nissan, Clarion, Hitachi, Fujitsu, Kirin and scenic spots in Sendai and its vicinity. The orientation also included programmes and activities related to Japanese culture and tradition such as *Sado* (tea ceremony), origami, kimono wearing, *ikebana* (flower arrangement), home visits and a taste of Japanese cuisine, its sushi and sashimi.

Computer Training

The CICC training programme and courses were different for trainees of the personal computer group(PC) and the software engineering group (SE). There were 13 trainees for the PC course. Adequate laptops and microcomputers as well as a Fujitsu and Hitachi mainframes were available in the training centre. Classes began normally at 9.30 am and ended at 4.00 pm with breaks in between for lunch and rests.

The PC course consisted of the following subjects:

- i) Operating system - DOS
- ii) Office Automation Packages - Word-processing (Wordstar) and Spreadsheets (Quattro)
- iii) Programming - C language
- iv) Graphics - Turbo C

- v) Local Area Network - Netware LAN
- vi) Databases - dBase
- vii) System design - (the core course)
- viii) General purpose computers/structured programming - using COBOL

The common courses for the PC and SE groups were:

- i) Presentation Methods - using education technology methodology
- ii) Latest Trends in Computer Technology
- iii) AI & Expert System

Trainees who were in the instructors group had an additional course on Instructional Training.

The courses and lectures were conducted by qualified staff from Software Consultant Corporation (SCC), a prominent software educational and training school of Japan and invited speakers from Hitachi, Fujitsu, NEC and NTT (Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation). The medium of instruction was English. Course work consisted of lectures, hand-on exercises, homework and tests. The courses were conducted in a relaxed and supportive pace which enabled trainees to grasp clearly various familiar and new concepts. The period for each course varied and the longest course was the system design workshop(20 days) which was also the core course of the training programme.

The system design course was the culmination of the training programme where trainees applied theories, principles and practical training to design a computerized system for a particular situation. The main project was to design an automated library system. Trainees worked in groups of four. The project required the presentation of a written documentation, progress report and demonstration of the software package. Each member was required to present some aspects of the project as part of the overall training programme to inculcate leadership skills.

The overall course syllabus provided a fundamental introduction to computer technology and an exposure to more advanced technologies. Of immense value was the exchange of experiences among trainees concerning the stages of development of computer technology in their respective countries. At the end of each course, trainees were

asked to evaluate the course and to give suggestions to enable CICC to further improve on it. Most trainees suggested the need to impart current software technologies available and how to utilize them efficiently and effectively. On completion of the group training course, certificates were presented by CICC and AOTS.

Study Tours

The study tours took trainees to various Japanese enterprises related to the computer field and to manufacturers of Japanese products. Visits were made to Nissan, Hitachi, Fujitsu, Clarion, Toyko Electricity Production Company (Tepco), and Kirin Brewery. The trainees were fascinated by the technologies that they were seeing for the first time. Among these were computer-aided design and manufacture of motor-cars, very large scale integrated (VLSI) technologies of Fujitsu super-computers, and the assembling of high-density disk drives in 'ultra' clean environment. There was also a visit to the impressive 43 floors high NEC Super Tower at Tamachi Tokyo. This building is branded an intelligent building as its services and environment are monitored by computers. Trainees were also briefed on R & D developments, Japanese management principles at work and the socio-cultural and economic contributions of Japanese affiliated companies in developing countries.

The course also included attendance to an international conference on artificial intelligence at Waseda University, computer exhibitions such as the annual Data Show and a visit to the SCC training centre.

LEISURE

Amidst the hectic training schedule, there was time for visits to historic and popular places in Tokyo and its vicinities such as Ueno, Shinjuku, Asakusa, the business square, Marunouchi, Yokohama, Kamakura, Hakone, Mt. Fuji and Tokyo Disneyland. The outstation visits included places like Kyoto, Nara, Matsushima, Sendai, Izu Peninsula and Hiroshima. For the more enterprising and adventurous, there were opportunities to further experience Japanese culture, arts and even skiing! The writer's own programme was rewarding as it enabled him to meet English speaking Japanese groups, university students and fellow Japanese librarians at the Bonenkai International Meeting at Hosei University Tokyo. He also experienced Japanese hospitality and savoured cuisines of the various seasons. There were also visits to Japanese cultural, arts and sciences museums and university libraries such as Keio University and Rikkyo University.

CONCLUSION

The experiences and knowledge gained from the CICC Group Training Course in Japan and interactions with fellow trainees and the Japanese friends cannot be quantified. The writer wishes to express his gratitude and acknowledgement to the University of Malaya and University of Malaya Library, the Malaysian National Computer Confederation(MNCC) and last but not least AOTS and CICC for their generous support and sponsorship without which the invaluable experiences gained would not have been possible.